

The *Character* and *Reward* of the  
good and faithful Servant.

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S E R M O N

OCCASIONED BY THE MUCH LAMENTED DEATH

OF

Charles Whittelsey, Esq;

Who departed this Life *July* 2d, 1764, in the 41st  
Year of his Age.

Preached the Lord's-Day after his Funeral.

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By JAMES DANA, A. M.

Pastor of the First Church in *Wallingford*.

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Sweet *peace* and heavenly *hope*, and humble joy,  
Divinely beam on his exalted soul ;  
Destruction gild, and crown him for the skies,  
With incommunicable lustre bright. Dr. YOUNG.

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DRAPER, in *Newbury-street*, 1764.

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The Church and People of the  
City and Parish of St. Andrew

BERMON

Occasioned by the much lamented death

Charles Whiteley, Esq.

Who departed this life July 28, 1794, in the 41<sup>st</sup>  
Year of his Age



By James A. M.

Minister of the First Church in New York

Printed and Sold by J. M. Smith, at the  
Sign of the Anchor, in the City of New York  
1794

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## The Character and Reward of the good and faithful servant.

MATT. XXV. 21.

*His Lord said unto him, Well done thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

MY BRETHREN,



YOU are all acquainted with the very melancholly occasion, which the providence of God this day calls me to take special notice of; nor do I question but that you at once see the propriety of the words just read, as the foundation to a discourse upon it. They are contained in our Saviour's parable of the talents, and exhibit the honor and reward he will finally advance such to, as have improved their talents well. "He that received five talents, came and brought other five, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. *His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*"

When



When I have described the good and faithful servant, I shall point out his reward ; then add some useful reflections, which the subject may suggest ; and, lastly, apply it to the very affecting, awakening providence that gave occasion to it.

*Fidelity* in general pre-supposes some trust committed ; the subject of which, not being the original proprietor, has not the arbitrary, absolute disposal of what he possesses ; yet as he received it from another at first, he is accountable for the use of it, and obliged to improve it to the particular purposes for which it was betruſted with him. He is but a ſteward : *Now it is required in ſtewards that a man be found faithful.* 1 Cor. iv. 2.

Our natural talents, our external and acquired advantages, all proceed from “ the giver of every good and perfect gift.” What have we that we did not receive ! what, that we may properly call our own ! The Father of our reaſonable and immortal ſpirits, and former of our bodies, (of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things) affords us all the means of intellectual and moral improvement—all the means and opportunities of uſefulneſs—and both diſpoſes and aſſiſts men to make a good uſe of their capacity and influence, or any external advantages put into their hands.

Farther, both natural and providential gifts are *variouſly* diſtributed ; ſome having “ five talents, others two, others but one : ” Natural and revealed light are communicated in different degrees. The circumſtances, under which Pagans, Jews and Chriſtians are placed, differ widely. They that enjoy the Chriſtian revelation have it in very different degrees of clearneſs. Particular perſons alſo, under the ſame general circumſtances, are variouſly furniſhed for improvement in knowledge and virtue, power and riches ; and in general, for being uſeful in the world in different relations and capacities. While ſome are qualified to be ſerviceable in divers important relations,



relations, others can occupy but a single and inferior, though necessary one.

Moreover, of this various distribution of the gifts of God among his creatures of mankind, no other account can, or need, be given than this, *Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*† The sovereign owner of all things may dispense his favors as he pleases, without acquainting us with the reasons of his proceedings. *May be not do what he will with his own ?*|| It is a sufficient, full vindication of divine providence to observe here, that where greater light and advantages are communicated, greater duty and higher services are required ; where the advantages of knowledge and improvement are comparatively small, the duty required is proportionably so : Agreeable to that approved rule,† *Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required : And to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.* *If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*\* But whether we have little or much, fidelity is equally required of us. For the single talent is not to be wrap'd up in a napkin any more than the five : much less may it be prostituted to purposes expressly vicious. As every one will be impartially dealt with at the day of retribution, so he that has received least can have no better excuse for being inactive, or perverting the gifts of God bestowed on him, than he that has received much.

The foregoing observations, clearly suggested by the parable, will be helpful in the proposed *description* of the "good and faithful servant." Without aiming to be very particular on a subject so general and extensive, it may be remarked, that notwithstanding the original faculties, tempers and endowments, or the education and outward advantages of mankind, are almost infinitely various ; yet some things may be said, which are equally descriptive of every "good and faithful servant," be his talents, station, or advantages what they will.

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† Matt. xi. 26. || xx. 15. † Luke xii. 48. \* 2 Cor. viii 12.

The "good and faithful servant," then, considers all his endowments and enjoyments as the gifts of God—all his abilities of doing good as so many bequests, for which he is accountable to the Maker and Lord of heaven and earth—that he is not his own, but bound indispensably to "glorify God with his body and spirit, which are the Lord's."|| He has a thankful, lively sense of the bounty of his sovereign Lord and owner in furnishing him with a capacity of being and doing, as well as enjoying good. He remembers that the gifts of nature and providence are freely dispensed, to be improved in the service, and to the honor, of the great Author of them, who has made his reasonable creatures accountable. He therefore neglects not to cultivate and improve his talents: Much less does he presume to make them subservient to any carnal, secular views; but lays out himself to promote the glory of God, and welfare of mankind, present and future, to the utmost of his power in his station; and by such means, as the great law of reason, and of the gospel, point out to him. He esteems the service of his Lord highly reasonable, and accounts it his honor and felicity to be employed in it. Hence he is *not slothful in business*, as one that hates his master, and the work assigned him: But like one that loves his work, and reverences the master he serves, he is *servant in spirit*\*—vigorous and active, that his work may be done in season: Nor does he perform it in a careless, superficial manner, but labours to have it well done, being inspired with a warm zeal for the honor and interest of his Lord. He fills up his time with work, and has too strong an affection to his Lord and Master to grow weary of his service. He abides in his own station of life, regularly and faithfully discharging the duties of it; using his talents for the good of "all men, especially such as are of the household of faith."—He considers especially the high privilege of enjoying the gospel, which brings the knowledge of salvation, and provides

|| 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20:      \* Rom. xii. 11.

provides such effectual means for a virtuous life---which lays such a firm foundation for the present peace and future hopes of apostate creatures : He considers the correspondent obligations it induces upon him ; hence he “ approves and practises the things that are excellent, and abounds in the fruits of righteousness,”† conformable to the gift and the grace of God, which hath appeared bringing this salvation.””

It is implied in what has been now said, that the good and faithful servant is actuated by the worthiest, even evangelical *motives*. What he has supremely and ultimately in view is the approbation of his Lord, “ who tries the reins and hearts.”” His words and actions agree to the sentiments and disposition of his mind. He remembers that he acts under the immediate inspection of a Being perfect in knowledge, and of perfect moral rectitude ; who will take an exact account of his servants, and render to them according to what they have, or might, or would have done. He acts habitually with religious reference to that day of recompence, when he must give account of his stewardship—that day, when every kind and degree of unfaithfulness, finally persisted in, will be disclosed—when the wicked and slothful servant will have no disguise or pretence, under which to conceal or excuse himself. He uses no arts to evade the sense of his duty ; but, in the expectation of a righteous judgment, “ studies to shew himself approved unto God,” a good steward of the talents committed to him. What he does is in the integrity of his heart, “ as to the Lord, not to men.” “ It is a small thing with him to be judged of man’s judgment.”” May his fidelity be approved by the judgment of that Being who cannot err, and “ is no respecter of persons,” he is not greatly concerned what men may say of him, or do to him : He persists in a steady course of doing and suffering his Lord’s will ; maintaining an inflexible regard to the intimations of his pleasure, in the midst of the most alluring temptations ; when beset with dangers,

† Phil. i. 10, 11. \* Tit. ii. 11, 12. † Rev. ii. 23. | 1 Cor. iv. 3, 5.



dangers, and severely tried—resolving “till he dies not to remove his integrity from him;”<sup>\*</sup> bearing injuries and reproaches with meekness and patience; acquiescing in the allotments of the alwise governor and disposer of events; superior to the applause, unawed by the terror of the world; supported and animated amidst the revolutions, changes and disappointments, and all the troublesome passages of life, by the powerful grace of God, who “will not suffer his servants to be tempted above what they are able”<sup>§</sup>—by steadfast faith in the great and precious promises of the gospel; hoping for the divine acceptance (not on the footing of his imperfect services, as though they were meritorious, or as though he were not indebted to the grace of God for his attainments, but) thro’ the appointed and only mediator and sacrifice, which he esteems a glorious display of the immerited, rich and essential mercy of God. Deeply sensible of his own unworthiness and moral impotency, his hope and confidence is, that God will not enter into strict judgment; and, with the chief of the apostles, he acknowledges, “Through the grace of God I am what I am; and this grace, which was bestowed on me, was not in vain.”<sup>||</sup>

These are the considerations and motives which influence the good and faithful servant. The great principle of fidelity is uniform and fixed: ’Tis the same in all the faithful, how different soever their respective talents and improvements are. For *he that is faithful in little, will be faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much*,<sup>†</sup> He that, from a view to the honor and approbation of God, from a sense of his own accountableness, is faithful to one, and that a low trust; will, from the same principle, be faithful to other and higher trusts---yea, to every trustment. But take away this principle, [a regard to the deity] and the very foundation of fidelity is destroyed: Take this away, and ’tis quite precarious whether a man will approve himself faithful in any single respect or relation; whether he is sincere

<sup>\*</sup> Job xxvii. 5, 6. <sup>§</sup> 1 Cor. x. 13. <sup>||</sup> chap. xv. 10. <sup>†</sup> Luke xvi. 10.

in what he says and professes ; whether he will fulfil his engagements ; whether he will be faithful to those with whom he has any civil commerce—to his own friends—to those of his own house—or even to himself. For he that is unfaithful to God, and his fellow-men, can be no friend to himself. His worst enemy is nearest home—in his own breast.

But it will illustrate and confirm the *general* account already given of the good and faithful servant, to take a view of him in some *particular relations* of life.

Let us first contemplate him in the relation of a *parent*. His children he knows are committed to his immediate guardianship. He considers the trust as very important and sacred, since their welfare, in time and throughout eternity, may depend not a little on the manner of his educating them. He is therefore faithful to instruct and govern them as their age and temper require ; to keep them from loose and vain companions ; to correct them according to his best discretion for such crimes as call for it ; to seek direction from above how to order them ; to pray with and for them ; to let them all see the light of his good example ; and in all respects to conduct towards them with parental tenderness, that he may fully convince them he desires, and could rejoice in, nothing so much as to see them “ walk in the truth.”

In the relation of a *child*, he is very dutiful and respectful ; “ honoring his parents in the Lord,”\* by receiving their instructions—hearkning to their counsels, warnings, reproofs—submitting to their authority, with which God and nature have invested them. In fine, his returns of filial respect and reverence for their parental care, proceed from a sense of duty to God, who placed him in this relation, as well as gratitude to them.

As a *master*, he is just and kind ; “ forbears threatening ;” “ gives to his servants what is equal,” and exacts no more of them. He remembers that he “ also has a master in heaven,”§ and expects to be feared and honored by his

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servants

servants no longer than he himself reverences that Being who has an unalienable right to our best service.

As a *servant*, he is obedient to his earthly master; concerned for his interest and honor; serves him 'in singleness of heart, not with eye-service;' Prompted hereto from considering, that 'whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.' ver. 5--8.

Is he a '*minister* of Christ, and steward of the mysteries of God?' his great concern is to teach his flock 'the good knowledge of the Lord;' to 'give every one his portion in due season,' as becomes a wise and faithful householder.† He does 'not walk in craftiness, nor handle the word of God deceitfully; but seeks to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God, by manifestation of the truth.' As 'he keeps back nothing profitable,' so he does not puzzle his hearers with abstruse, uninteresting speculations. He is an 'example to the flock,' and 'watcheth for souls as one that must give account;' in every thing 'taking heed to the ministry he has received of the Lord, to fulfil it'—and animated in his work from a warm zeal for Christ, and affectionate concern for the salvation of men.

View him as a *civil ruler*: He is careful to come up to that character, 'He that rules over men must rule in the fear of God.‖ He diligently studies the duty of his station, and steadily keeps in view the great end of all authority among men, that we may be under advantage to 'lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.' When he has any concern in making laws, the only enquiry with him is, what laws are just and equal—suited to the circumstances and necessities of the community. And in the exercise of the authority reposed in him, he is just and faithful: He encourages and protects the useful members of the common-wealth, and honors the laws by his own example. He 'bears not the sword in vain, but is a terror to evil-doers.' He frowns on wickedness,

† Luke xii. 42.

‖ 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.



wickedness, confusion and disorder, and promotes peace, virtue and good manners. He dare not abuse any power lodg'd with him, as a means of injuring or oppressing any man : He has too great reverence of the oath of God to prostitute it to such execrable purposes.

In judging civil causes, neither interest, prejudice, passion, nor any popular views, pervert his judgment. He will not justify the wicked for reward, and condemn the just ; but shuts his hand from taking a bribe, and with an honest scorn and indignation banishes from his presence the man that dare tender one. Far from being corrupted by flattery, or terrified by human greatness, he ' honors not the person of the mighty, nor countenances a poor man ' in a matter of civil right. He is inflexibly impartial out of reverence to that being, ' who accepteth not the person of princes ; nor regards the rich any more than the poor.' He ' puts on righteousness, and it cloaths him ; his judgment is as a robe and a diadem : He delivereth the poor that cry, the fatherless also, and such as have none to help them. The cause he knows not, he searches out. He breaks the jaws of the wicked, and plucks the spoil out of his teeth.' \*

Whatever office he sustains in the church or common wealth, he aims to understand the duties of it—to be and to do what that obliges him, that he may be useful in his place, according to his best ability.

Is he possess'd of *riches* ? he considers whence they come, and for what end they were given ; that he is not the absolute proprietor of them, but a steward ; that therefore he has no right to waste, or hoard them up. ' He disperses abroad, and gives to the poor.' The blessing of many ready to perish comes upon him, and he causeth the widow's heart to sing for joy.' He endeavors to order his secular business so as to employ many of the poor in honest labor. He distributes liberally to schemes of public utility—the encouragement of manufactures, arts and sciences ; the promotion of christian knowledge, and

decent support of the public worship of God, and the like. What he principally values his wealth for, is, that it enlarges his opportunity of doing good ; and in the distribution of his public or more private charity, a sincere, supreme regard to the honor of God and good of men is his governing principle and motive.

If endow'd with a *superior genius*, or under special advantages for improving in useful knowledge ; he remembers ' who it is that makes him to differ,' that ' he has nothing but what he receiv'd ' from the father of lights, and fountain of wisdom ; that his distinguished talents and opportunities are given in order to his being proportionably useful. His endowments don't excite pride and vanity in him, and make him look down with scorn on his fellow creatures below him : He patiently bears with their folly and infirmities ; is ready to instruct, counsel and advise them. To instruct the ignorant, and make all wiser (as far as lies in his power) in order to their being better, is the height of his ambition. As he endeavours to spread useful knowledge in general among men, so he is especially concern'd to make them wise to salvation.'

Is he entrusted with any thing that is *another man's* ? He does not turn it to his own emolument, or pervert it from the use to which it was appropriated ; but, as a faithful steward, applies it to the purposes for which it was committed to him. He takes no advantage of the confidence put in him, unless it be to avail himself of the opportunity hereby given him to promote, in an higher degree, the outward and spiritual welfare of his fellow men and fellow christians. For the greater share he has in their esteem and confidence, the more he lays himself out to serve them, that their expectations from him may not be disappointed. He never imposes on the credulity of the weak, in any *material* point : He never betrays the intrusted secret of his friend, in what he professes you may be sure you have the very sentiments and feelings of his heart. He maintains inviolable truth, probity and honor

honor—is faithful to his engagements—equally so whether there are, or are not human witnesses of them : For he remembers he has greater witness than that of men. Tho' 'he swear to his own hurt, he changes not.' He deliberates before he determines : And having on mature consideration and foretho't satisfied himself, he is steady in his principles and conduct—the direct contrary to 'the double minded man, who is unstable in all his ways ;'—who makes up a judgment without due consideration, is rash and hasty in his resolves, and alters his opinion or practice on the most trivial occasions.

Lastly, if we consider the good and faithful servant in any of the *common occupations of life*, he is diligent and faithful in his civil calling. He neither 'eats the bread of idleness,' nor fraud. He uses his best skill in his particular art, and takes no advantage of other men's ignorance of it. He does not over-reach or oppress in a civil contract : As a trader, mechanic or husbandman, he is industrious and frugal, just and faithful.

You perceive upon the whole, that 'the good and faithful servant' fills up his particular station and relations in life well, be they higher or lower, more enlarged or contracted, more or less numerous—that he is a man of prevailing integrity—who considers that whatever advantages he enjoys, he must account for the use of, 'ere-long to the sovereign proprietor of the universe—that he is superior to secular views—has a real, fixed, supream regard to the approbation and glory of God, which is coincident with the good of man ; yea, which he places herein—that he is unspotted from the pollutions of the world ; unawed by it's terrors ; patient and resigned under it's sufferings—alike cautious of deceiving others, and of being deceived himself. Being apprized of dangerous temptations and trials, his watchfulness and virtuous resolution are roused. He indulges not to a careless, secure frame ; prepares to meet difficulties and opposition ; keeps as much as possible out of the way of temptation ;

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takes warning from those by which he may have been overcome, or greatly in danger ; and is jealous over himself with a godly jealousy.\* Conscious of human weakness and depravity, and that the grace of God is his only security, he fervently prays for strength against sin—that his faithful endeavors may be assisted and succeeded ; and, patiently continuing in well-doing, ‘ his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord.’ Psal. 112. 7.

I have been much longer than was expected in *describing* the good and faithful servant, and shall not therefore be lengthy in *pointing out his reward* ; which was the next thing proposed : It is signified in the text by the sentence of his Lord, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things : Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

*Well done*, \* thou good and faithful servant ! What a satisfaction must it be to the faithful servant to be *highly* approved by the supreme Lord, and unerring judge of the world ! What an honor to have his fidelity publicly acknowledged and celebrated by his Lord and judge, when he comes in his glory ! How infinitely preferable is the plaudit of him whose judgment is according to truth, to the applause of ignorant and partial men ! Who would not desire and prefer the honor that comes from God ?

*Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.* Tho’ the reward of the faithful will bear some *certain* proportion to their services, compared with their talents and opportunities ; yet it will exceed all conception and desert. *Desert*, is the reward of *debt* ! Could we make the supposition, that any one had

\* “ The original word ( *eu* ) has a peculiar force, far beyond what I can exactly express in *English*. It was used by *auditors* or *spectators* in any public exercise, to express the highest *applause*, when any part had been *excellently performed*. *Bravely done* ! comes something near it, but is not equally elegant or forcible.”

Doddridge in loc.

had been so faithful as to 'have done all the things that were commanded him,' and never at any time to have transgressed his Lord's will, must he not acknowledge himself an *unprofitable* servant? Luke 17. 10. And can such a servant merit from the hand of his Lord? much less can those servants merit who have in many things transgressed and failed of their duty; which is true of the best and most faithful servant on earth. Who is there that does not deserve to be *beaten with many stripes*, 12. 47. rather than to be rewarded? We must acknowledge the reward to be of grace—that we are indebted to the free bounty, the rich mercy of God, thro' Jesus Christ, for our expectation of a glorious reward.

Let us observe the unbounded grace of God to his unworthy, sinful servants: Having been faithful in a *few* things, they shall be made rulers over *many* things—advanced to higher trustments, in reward of their fidelity to the lower trust originally committed to them. This takes place in part in the *present* state of things. 'For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.'† But the *future* reward of the faithful is especially intended in the text, by the figurative expression of their being made *rulers* over many things: Agreeable to which are those other representations of scripture, where it is said, That *the kingdom and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high God, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom*\*—that *the saints shall judge the world*§—*shall live and reign with Christ*||—that *every one that overcometh, shall sit down with him on his throne*§—that such as are faithful unto death, shall receive a crown of life\*—*shall be made kings and priests unto God*†—that the apostles of the Lamb shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.|| 'This honor have the saints.'

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† Matt. 13. 12. \* Dan. 7. 27. § 1. Cor. 6. 2. || Rom. 8. 17.  
§ Rev. 3. 21. \* 2. 10. † 5. 10. || Luke 22. 30.

Most of these passages perhaps primarily relate to such as have made *eminent* attainments under peculiar trials, or *persecution* for religion : But they may well enough be applied, though in a lower sense, to the faithful in general : For *if we suffer we shall also reign with him.\** And in all ages it is true in a sense, ‘that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God.’ In all ages, ‘they who will live godly in Christ Jesus’ meet with more or less unkind and cruel treatment, from the openly profane, or ungodly hypocrites.

As he that gains five pounds, with so many first intrusted with him, shall be exalted to a throne ; so the least and most despised saint here on earth shall be advanced to honor by the king of glory, in that day when many of ‘the kings of the earth, and of the great, and rich, and mighty men,’ would be glad to ‘hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains.’|| What does it avail to wear a crown, or hold a sceptre here, if shame and everlasting contempt is their only promotion hereafter ! But the faithful servant, though he makes his way to the kingdom through much tribulation, through reproaches and sufferings in this world, will have an ample recompence in the ‘far more exceeding weight of glory’—when he shall appear before the Lord and judge of all with ‘a crown of pure gold on his head’—not a *corruptible*, but an *incorruptible crown*§—a crown of life—a crown of glory that *fadeth not away*.† What dignity and felicity does this imply ! The greater opposition and difficulties he has to encounter here, the more highly will he prize his happy state when he ‘receives a kingdom that shall not be moved.’

We cannot say precisely what is implied in these emblems and figurative descriptions of the glory to which the faithful will be exalted ‘at the appearing and kingdom of Jesus Christ ;’ the employments of the heavenly  
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\* 2 Tim. 2. 12. || Rev. 6. 15. § 1 Cor. 9. 25. † 1 Pet. 5. 4.



state being so much above our comprehension. But tho' it doth not yet appear what they shall be ; yet when he shall appear, they shall be like him, and shall see him as he is. §—' shall be with him where he is, to behold and partake in his glory' \*—shall be received as ' joint heirs with Christ, and be glorified together ' with him. † And the scriptural descriptions produced above clearly imply, in general, the greatness, perfection and perpetuity of their reward.

Farther, though we are ignorant after what manner the spirits of just men exist upon their leaving the body, yet we are assured in general, that they *immediately enter into the joy of their Lord*. Their full degree of glory will not indeed take place till the redemption of their bodies from the bondage of corruption, to be fashioned like the glorious body of their exalted head and redeemer ; when they shall stand compleat in the glorious liberties of the sons of God, and when the sentence in the former part of the text will be pronounced upon them. But though this sentence will not be declared till ' the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men ; ' yet the faithful ' enter into the joy of their Lord ' *at death* : They no sooner die in the Lord, than they are with him in paradise, sharing in his joy. This was the case with one, who, though very unfaithful in his life, was a true penitent at his death—owned Christ for his Lord (indeed the first opportunity he had of doing it,) and in circumstances which leave no room to suspect his sincerity : To whom Christ said, ' This day shalt thou be with me in paradise. ' ¶ As this was said before the Son of man was glorified, it follows, that he entered into a state of joy prior to his entering into his glory. St. Paul was *confident* that he should be *present with the Lord* as soon as *absent from the body*. This made him willing to have his earthly tabernacle dissolved. \* Yea, he *had a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.* †

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§ 1 John iii. 2. \* John xvii. 24. † Rom. viii. 17. ¶ Luke xxii. 40—43. \* 2 Cor. v. 8. † Phil. i. 2. 3.

Upon the whole, the final rewards of the faithful will be more or less distinguished according to their respective attainments. They will be judged according to their talents and improvements. He that has improved well ten talents, shall *have authority over ten cities*---he that has made a good use of *five*, shall have authority over *five* cities. And that he that has improved *one*, shall in no wise lose his reward. 'As one star differeth from another star in glory,' so there is the reward of a prophet and apostle, of a righteous man, and of him that only 'gives a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple.'

I proceed now to subjoin some *useful reflections* relative to what has been said on the character and reward of the good and faithful servant.

It appears from what has been discoursed, that we were not made for ourselves alone. We have various connections with our fellow creatures, and different relations in society; are qualified in different respects and degrees to be helpful to one another; are mutually dependent: Consequently, we are not at liberty to use or neglect our talents, or manage them as we please. The mutual wants of mankind oblige to an interchange of kind offices. He that has no desire, takes no care, to be serviceable in his place, practically disowns his relation to society, and can have no claim to be treated as a member of it. For however true it be, that many do in *fact* live to themselves, yet *no man ought to live to himself*.\* If we are not the original proprietors of our respective advantages and opportunities; if they are trusts committed to us by the all-wise creator and governor of the universe, then we are indispensably bound to improve them in his service, and to the purposes of his glory. Did we consider the gifts (natural or providential) we have received, as a trust reposed in us by our common Lord, we should not presume either to hide them in a napkin, or to make them serve the ends of pride, luxury, or intemperance. To let them lie useless, or squander them away, is a criminal abuse

\* Rom. xiv. 7.

abuse of them ; since they were given to be improved—improved to such certain purposes, other than which we have no warrant to apply them to. We are therefore cautioned, by the preceding discourse, against sloth and indolence on the one hand, and prodigality and intemperance on the other. Who is there that may not in some way promote the interest of his fellow christians ? If we cannot do all the good we would be glad to, we should be thankful that it is in our power to do so much. And when we are assured, that the least office of kindness, performed from a right principle of reverence to the deity, and affection to Jesus Christ, is not forgotten, we should not disdain to stoop to the humblest offices.

Farther, to excite and quicken us to faithfulness, it will be of use often to recollect, that the Lord of heaven and earth observes what improvement we make of his gifts, *with a view to call us to account, and render to us accordingly.* The parable informs us, that \* the Lord of those servants, to whom the talents were committed, came, after a long time, and reckoned with them. We cannot tell *how long* it will be before our Lord will come and reckon with us. The uncertainty of the time of his coming is one very good reason, why we should be forthwith stirred up to faithful diligence in his service ; lest when he calls for us we be found slothful, or wasting his goods. Though our Lord is now absent from us in body, yet he closely inspects our behavior, and tries the reins and the hearts. He observes whether we are employed in his work, or engaged in it with due fervor of spirit ; or whether we loiter away our time, or are slothful ; or spend our strength in the service of his enemies---whether we increase or diminish his goods. He expects, indeed, no profit himself by our improvements. All the advantage will redound to ourselves : For if we approve ourselves faithful in a few things, he will honor us with higher be-trustments. On the contrary, if we prove unfaithful, what hurt do we do him ? we are the only sufferers.†

Since

† Job xxxv. 6—8. xxii. 2, 3.



Since then we certainly know, that he will come sooner or later to take account of our respective enjoyments and improvements, it is a point of wisdom to consider the work he has assigned us in particular, and to be seasonable in our application to it, as the time allowed for doing it is so precarious.

Farther, as an inducement to an early application to religion, this subject instructs us, that the more seasonable we are in setting about our Lord's work, the greater will be our reward, as we shall make greater progress, and reach higher attainments. Let us then be industrious and prudent : Let us guard against the mispense of time. Let us watch, and lay hold of, every opportunity to serve God and our generation, filling up our time with usefulness. Let us be ambitious of excelling in divine virtues, 'Tis a noble ambition to labor at ' coming behind in no good gift.' They also that are diligent and faithful in the work of the Lord are *always* ready for his coming. *If he come in the second or third watch, blessed are those servants ;* for they are prepared to give up their account.

Again, this subject should put us upon examining closely, whether we have not neglected and sinfully abused our time and talents. Are we not self-condemned ? Do we not find reason to accuse ourselves of many instances and degrees of unfaithfulness ? Have we maintained any proportionable solicitude to improve the precious means we have had of advancing our souls in divine knowledge, holiness and joy ? of promoting the welfare of our fellow creatures in various ways ? Can we endure the strict enquiry of that day when we must answer for all our privileges ? • when every work will be brought into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil ? when nothing is covered, that shall not be revealed ? nor hid that shall not be known ? Can we look forward to this decisive day of accounts without any misgivings ? Let me add, the importance of our placing ourselves as before the tribunal of our Lord and judge : For what can induce us to be faithful, if this fails to do it ?

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The faithful servant, *conscious of his fidelity*, has joy unspeakable (even now) in the prospect of the crown of righteousness laid up for him. This reconciles him to the sufferings of life, and makes him willing to depart whenever his Lord shall see fit to call him hence. (Though he is willing also to continue in the flesh during his Lord's pleasure, to serve the interest of religion, do good to mankind, and brighten his own future crown.) But especially will the day of retributions be joyful to him, when he shall be pronounced *a good and faithful servant* by a judge that cannot err, and in the view of the whole universe of beings.

Does not the time hasten on when nothing will be, or *seem*, of any importance to us, but the approbation of that Being whose we are?—to whom we owe all our powers, all our external goods, with the capacity of enjoying them? all our spiritual privileges? whose favor is our only hope, as his 'loving-kindness is better than life.' Are we not then admonished, *without delay*, to seek his face and favor with the most earnest solicitude? to seek it in the way, and on the terms, declared in the gospel, where the only method of reconciliation is revealed? Our space to make our peace with God is limited. Death at farthest puts a period to it: And do we know the time of our death? Can it be far distant? are we not frequently admonished of human frailty? are not lively emblems hereof frequently presented to us? And since we shall appear in the same moral state at judgment as death finds and leaves us in, is it not our wisdom to be constantly employed about our Lord's business? to be watchful and vigorous in it? that whenever our opportunity of service shall be at an end, we may 'rest from our labors,' and enter into our master's joy.

This, in a judgment of charity, is now his happy state, whose remains we followed to the grave sorrowing the last week. Methinks I saw the immortal spirit takes its "upward flight," to receive the plaudit of its judge, *Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful!*

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The high esteem persons of every denomination among us had of Mr. WHITTELSEY forbids my entertaining the least apprehension, that any will be disposed to charge me with flattering the dead in what I shall say of him : Especially as I am determined to say nothing but what I dare appeal for the truth of to all who were acquainted with him. Silence on such an occasion every one might justly think inexcusable : And to mention so worthy useful a person without particular marks of honor and respect would really be worse than to be silent.

The Lord and proprietor of the universe was pleased to endow him with many excellent talents, whereby he was qualified for public usefulness early in life. His natural disposition was humane and benevolent ; his apprehension quick ; his judgment solid. He was well acquainted with most of the common affairs of life ; of an active spirit ; and had a particular faculty at dispatching business. Tho' he was rather of a facetious, than a grave turn ; yet his conversation was always free from tho'tless levity, and conformable to the purest rules of sobriety and decorum. While he was condescending and obliging to persons of the lowest rank, he maintained the dignity of his station. He was courteous and hospitable ---a father to the poor, many of whom can bear witness to his private charity. With a moderate fortune, he devised liberal things. He was of a public spirit ; an hearty friend to this society and town, to this country, to all mankind.

You well know he was a man of strict veracity and integrity, fair and just in his mercantile employment. I may challenge any man to say, whether he ever wrong'd him in trade, or any civil contract---whether he ever defrauded or oppressed the labourer in his wages, or detained his dues from him, or was hard and close-handed with any he employed in his service, though his method of business was calculated to employ many of the poor---whether he ever betrayed those who put confidence in him ---whether he ever injured any man in his person or good name



name—ever gave judgment in a civil cause to 'justify the wicked, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him'—ever took a bribe, or was warped in his judgment by party interest. Might he not make the same appeal to you, as *Samuel* did to the people of Israel? 'I have walked before you from my childhood to this day. Behold, here I am, witness against me--- Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it to you.' And must you not answer as the people replied to *Samuel*? 'Thou hast not defrauded, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hands.'||

His greatest enemies were fully convinced of, and sometimes had the ingenuity to acknowledge, his superior abilities, probity and fidelity; his good understanding and ready discernment in the civil law, (with which he had taken laudable pains to acquaint himself) and his strict regard to it in every case brought before him to give judgment upon. Nor do I think there is a single person among us but what would as soon leave an *honest* cause to him, as to any one that can be named. I have heard it mentioned, that there never was but one appeal from his judgment in the multitude of cases tried by him; and in that instance his judgment was established by the court to which the appeal was made. Indeed people of all denominations had such a persuasion of his knowledge in the law, and inflexible impartiality in judgment, that they against whom judgment was given confided in the equity or legality of it, though they might have other apprehensions of the case before. In critical causes, he was always mature and deliberate in making up a judgment; properly diffident of himself, and ready to ask counsel of his superiors: But in common ones, he needed not to adjourn from time to time to ask advice.

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Though he had not the advantage of a liberal education, he had acquired a good knowledge of men and books. His opinion and advice were generally consulted in cases of difficulty: He was instrumental in healing many private differences among neighbours---was much improved in arbitrations, and settling matters of civil interest, and in draughting civil instruments. As the town improved him to represent them at the General Court for many years successively, so he appeared in that capacity to advantage, and acquired great reputation among the members of that Assembly. An aged and honorable counsellor informs, that gentlemen of the first distinction in the government spake of him with particular marks of esteem: And his being frequently employed to confer on the affairs of the government did him honor, as it manifested the opinion the representative body of the people had of his capacity and fidelity. Nor do I know any man that promised fairer for preferment in the government.

As he was a 'good and faithful servant' of the *public*, so you, my brethren, are witnesses, that he ever sought the welfare of *this society in particular*. According to his best ability, he laid himself out to promote order, union and peace, virtue and the interest of religion among us. In the various trusts wherewith you were pleased to honor him, he approved himself faithful. The share he had in your affection and esteem was fully manifest, not only in his last sickness, and at his death and burial; but in your general treatment of him while going in and out among you (for which you have the thanks---the hearty thanks, of his mourning relatives.) Nor can I think your regards were misplaced: For may I not say of him as *St. Paul* did of *Timotheus*? You 'had no man like-minded, who *naturally* cared for your state.' He was not one of those, who (as the Apostle adds) 'seek their own things.' His inclination to serve you in your civil and religious interests was as good as his ability. Like '*Mordecai*, who was great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of  
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his brethren, he fought the wealth of his people; speaking peace to all' who had recourse to him.\* He was always ready to give his advice and assistance to such as needed and requested it—was a principal supporter of good order among us—frowned upon gross immoralities—and was a 'terror to evil-doers.' He 'scattered the wicked with his eyes. When the eye saw him it gave witness to him; and when the ear heard him, then it blessed him.† And no marvel, for 'when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice.‡

He never practised any mean arts to rise to preferment among you: He heartily scorned them, and the little men that use them. The trusts reposed in him were all unsolicited—conferred out of pure respect to his merit. And so far was he from making a gain of his public or private services, that you are sensible he was ready to forego his private interest to be helpful to you. Nor was he induced hereto from views of popular applause: He was superior to such low motives. So far as we are capable of judging, the considerations that prevailed in his mind were reverence and gratitude to that Being who qualified him to be useful.

He was, you well know, a constant devout attendant on the public worship of God, and ordinances of the gospel: Nor was he less careful to maintain the worship of God in his family. To compleat his character, he was a person of unaffected piety and solid virtue; catholic and steady in his religious principles, uniform and consistent in his conduct; of fortitude and stability of mind—meekly patient under *peculiar* trials. In one word, he was a just and good man, 'one that feared God, and gave much alms to the people; and of good report among' those that knew him.

He departed in a good hope of obtaining mercy thro' the blood of the everlasting covenant.

And now, my brethren of this church and congregation, how great is the loss which the town in general, and

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\* Esth. x. 3. || Job xxix. 11. † Prov. xxix. 2. 20. 8.



we in special, have sustained ! A most useful, exemplary, faithful man is taken from us. You had great dependance upon him : Your eyes were very much to him to lead and conduct in your public affairs, and to assist you in your more private, personal concerns. — In the ordinary course of things, he might have been spared many years, to have been farther and more extensively serviceable : For he had as it were but just entered on public usefulness ; though he did much in a short time. But it has pleased the Sovereign of life to remove him from his services here on earth, in the midst of his days, and the highest expectations of his friends : And we have reason to think he is *entred into the joy of our Lord*—translated to higher and more important services, as he was diligent and faithful in improving his talents in the world.

For ourselves, who ‘ shall see his face no more,’ we have reason to be deeply humbled under this remarkable frown of providence ; (for as such we ought to view it.) When God removes from a place those who were eminent blessings in it, and in the midst of life, is there not a cause ? Let us be humbled under the mighty hand of God. Let us enquire what we have done to provoke him to visit us with this sore rebuke. The prospect before us is gloomy. There is danger some may be disposed to disturb our peace, and scatter you abroad. Beware of giving heed to any who would unsettle your minds. Let us pray earnestly to God, that no root of bitterness may spring up among us. Let each one resolve to study ‘ the things that make for peace.’ Let us seek to the great repairer of breaches to find out, and raise up, ‘ a man to make up the hedge, and stand in the gap’—to encourage religion, virtue and good order, and discountenance profaneness, gross immoralities and disorders. Let us not dishonor God in this day of our affliction, but patiently submit to his providence : For we must justify it in all events. Tho’ ‘ clouds and darkness are round about him’—though his ‘ judgments are a great deep ;’ yet ‘ his ways,’ which  
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are 'past finding out, are just and true.' To us the dispensation is unsearchable, that a man so highly esteemed, of such capacity, so well-disposed, and so much needed, should be taken from us so early in life, and in the prime of his usefulness. But, no doubt, there are wise and good reasons for it. 'The Lord God omnipotent,' infinitely wise, and all-perfect 'reigneth,' and 'sitteth king forever.' Let us not presume to censure his providence—but be thankful that he continued his servant so long among us, and that he obtained mercy to be so good and faithful a servant. 'Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord'—confessing our sins; acknowledging the righteousness of his judgments—and trusting his providence and grace to make up outward losses, and sanctify this heavy stroke to the society, town and colony.

May you, honour'd Madam, in particular, have it sanctified to you. You have lost a lovely son, who you hoped would be a staff of your age.\* But his God, and the God of your fathers, liveth—whose providential care you have had large experience of, from your childhood till now—of whose mercy you are yet living, and not left destitute of dutiful, affectionate children; who will do all in their power to ease your burthen, alleviate your grief, and render your declining days comfortable. Be thankful, Madam, that God gave you such a son—that he was spared so long—made such a comfort to you, and so great a blessing to this place, and in his generation—and that you have so good hope concerning him. I rejoice that you endure the trial with so much calmness, fortitude and resignation: As streams are cut off, you will have recourse to the fountain: May God almighty bless and support you! May you be waiting patiently the few remaining days you have to live on earth; and, being found *faithful unto death, enter into the joy of your Lord.*

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\* Mrs. Sarah Whittelsey, Æt 80th. surviving consort of the Rev<sup>d</sup> Samuel Whittelsey, whose praise is in all the churches.

And may the God of all consolation comfort the surviving brethren and sisters under this bereavement, and lead them to a proper improvement of this awakening providence. May a double portion of the excellent spirit that dwelt in their dear brother rest on them. May they act their respective parts as worthily on the stage of life as he did. May that harmony, friendship, and affectionate brotherly love, which it has been their honor and happiness to maintain, still continue. And may they severally be found diligent and faithful in their Lord's business whenever they shall be called off the stage.

For those brethren who have the honor to be employed in the work of the gospel ministry, we can desire nothing better, than that, as wise and faithful stewards over the house of God, they may 'give every one his portion in due season,'—'may be wise to win souls,' and 'watch for them as those that must give account.' 'Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.'

The providence which gave occasion to the preceding discourse, affords special instruction to the middle-aged. You see that *in the midst of life, we are in death.* We, as well as the person whose death we are now deploring, may be cut down in our 'full strength,' while our 'breasts are full of milk, and our bones moistened with marrow.' They who are flourishing in full life and vigor, who have the firmest constitution, are not less liable to the stroke of death than those whose 'strength is labor and sorrow.' We had exhibited to us examples of both these the last week. For the day after we paid the last office of affection and respect to our dear friend who died in the *midst* of life, we were called to attend the funeral of a *very aged* person—'a widow of about fourscore' and two 'years old, which served God with fastings and prayers, night and day'—who was generally reported to be a pious, exemplary,

*Samuel Whittelsey of Milford, and Chauncy Whittelsey, of New-Haven.*



exemplary, sincere Christian ; and who had for some time been expecting and longing for her departure. So that the providence of God speaks to those in the decline, and those in the midst of life. It is an admonition to both these ages of persons among us, to exercise greater vigilance and fidelity in improving the talents committed to them severally—to redeem time, and double their diligence—to fill up their places and relations of life as becomes those servants who expect to give an account—to be above all things studious to approve themselves to the Lord and Judge of all—and to ‘ stand with their loins girded, as men expecting the coming of their Lord.’

Wherefore, ‘ let not the rich man glory in his riches, neither let the mighty man glory in his might. But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth,’ and humbly serveth, the absolutely perfect Being ; whom to resemble is our highest honor and felicity—and whom we can resemble in nothing more than in promoting the welfare of mankind in every possible way. Or, in other words, being *good and faithful servants*.

Let us be put upon recollecting how much time has been mis-spent, which should have been employed in the service of our Lord and master ; how little good we have done in the world compared with what we might have done. How many have been hitherto wicked and slothful, instead of good and faithful servants ? Let the time past suffice, wherein our precious advantages have been neglected or abused ; and let us be henceforward circumspect, diligent and fervent in our Lord’s work—Be steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord : Forasmuch as we know that our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord.

May neither old nor young presume on life, or seek satisfaction in any of the enjoyments of it. How very feeble and uncertain is all human dependance ! how empty and fleeting our dearest comforts ! What ignorance and folly do we betray when we entertain unbounded expectations from dear relations, or friends ! I stand reproved,  
that

that I had too great dependance on my faithful friend, and brother in affinity, "whose sudden rush from life's meridian joys" has at once cut off my pleasing hopes. 'There is a friend nearer than a brother :'. But my friend is removed 'far from me into darkness.' I would not, however, censure the administration of 'him that is most just'—but desire humbly to reverence and adore that Being whose ways are past finding out; and to receive the admonition to cultivate a more intimate friendship with him.

To conclude, may the late affecting providence make suitable impression on every one here present. May it effectually teach us all man is 'vanity at his best state.' Let us be ambitious of nothing so much as to be serviceable in our generation. Let us apply ourselves with proper diligence to the discharge of the duties of our particular callings—be watchful, patient, courageous and faithful herein, amidst all temptations and conflicts—resolving, in the strength of divine grace, 'not to remove our integrity from us till we die.' Let us 'be followers of all them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' Especially (for our direction and imitation in every relation and condition) let us keep in view the perfect pattern and example of our blessed Lord, 'the author and finisher of our faith, who was faithful to him that appointed him—who 'looked not on his own things, but on the things of others'—'who being in the form of God, humbled himself to the form of a servant, in the likeness of men,' for our sakes.† A consciousness that we have well improved our talents and opportunities, must be a ground of perpetual peace in life, and of serenity and hope in the hour of death. If we are found serving and imitating our Lord, we shall enter into his joy immediately upon our dismissal hence : And at the important day, when he shall come to reckon with his servants, shall be able to 'give up our account with joy,' and, through the infinite mercy of God, and merits of our Saviour, receive the sentence, *Well done, good and faithful servants.* † Phil. ii. 4—

T H E E N D.

